

CERTAINE
CONSIDERATIONS,

SHEWING

The necessity of a CORRESPONDENCE
in Spirituall matters betwixt
all Protestant Churches.

An especiall meanes for effecting whereof, and
healing our present breaches, would be a
NATIONALL SYNOD.

By *John Dury.*



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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

Necessity of a

Reformation in spiritual matters

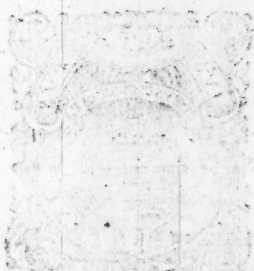
among all Protestant Churches.

An especial means for effecting which

holding our present practices would be

NATIONAL SIN.

By John Dyer.



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**Certain Considerations, shewing
the necessity of a Correspondency in
Spirituall matters betwixt Protestant
Churches.**

Here be three heads of reasons,
by which the absolute necessity
of a Spiritual Correspondencie
in religious matters betwixt Pro-
testant Churches may be made
apparent, which are these:

First, the truth of their Religi-
ous profession of Christianity doth oblige them to
intend a mutuall Correspondency. Secondly, the
condition of the Churches should strongly induce
them speedily to settle it one with another: And
thirdly, the danger of the publike states should
move them to maintaine it constantly, when once
it is settled.

Of the first.

In the truth of our Religious profession of
Christianity, we should consider the things where- 1.

in it doth consist; the end wherefore God giveth his graces, for which wee should make use of the same, and the meanes by which wee may attaine to this end.

The truth of Christianity consisteth in the soundness of the Doctrine, & in the holiness of the life of the Professors, *Tit. 1. 1, 3, 8*. To maintain & advance both these, Protestants are obliged one towards another, by the communion of Saints, whereof they make profession in the Symbole of the Apostles. But the communion of Saints is not onely the conjunction of beleevers in faith, and hope, and hearty prayers towards God one for another; but also a reall endeavour to communicate the graces which God hath bestowed upon every one severally, to each other in common, by a charitable care to provoke one another unto love, and to good workes, *Heb. 10. 24*. which cannot possibly be done, except a Correspondency for maintaining of Truth and Holinesse be intended: Therefore such a Correspondency is absolutely necessarie to be intended; and if it be not intended, the communion of Saints is broken, and the truth of Doctrine, with the life of Holinesse, will suffer losse and damage thereby, and God will infallibly require such a losse at the hands of those which are causes thereof, or doe not hinder it when they may.

2. The end wherefore God doth give the graces and gifts of his Spirit, is, that the Members of the body of Christ should profit thereby one towards another, *1 Corinth. 12. 7*. and that they should

should trade therewith, to gaine more graces, *Luke 19. 12, 13. Matth. 25. 14.* But it is no more possible to doe this, without an intention of maintaining an intercourse of Spirituall Correspondencie; then it is possible for the members of the bodie, which are not knit together by joynts, sinews, and veines, to conveigh bloud and nourishment one to another: Therefore a course of Correspondencie is absolutely necessary to be intended; or, if it be not intended, and put in practice, Gods intention, in giving his gifts unto his Church, is not fulfilled, and hee may, and will justly deprive such of them as make no good use thereof.

The end, to which wee should use Gods graces, 3.
is the glory of God, *1 Corin. 10. 31.* and our mutuall edification, *1 Corin. 14. 26.* and *Rom. 14. 19.* and *15. 2.* These two ends are subordinate one to another: For, God cannot be glorified otherwise by us, then by this, that we bring forth much fruit one towards another, *John 15. 6.* and *Matth. 15. 6.* because our good cannot reach to him, as *David* saith, *Psal. 16. 2. but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent Ones, in whom should be all our delight, ibid. ver. 3.* But it is not possible to intend this communication of our goodnesse unto the Saints, by the endeavour of mutuall edification, except we use meanes to know one anothers condition, of which, the chiefe is a constant course of mutuall intelligence and correspondencie: Therefore a settled Correspondencie is wholly necessary to be intended, if wee will not deprive God of his glory, and his Saints of the interest

which they should have in us by the right use of our talents.

4. The meanes by which this end is to bee attained is, to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, which wee are commanded, and by many reasons exhorted to doe, *Ephes. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6*. Now this endeavour, because it is the immediate effect of true charity, therefore it is the true meanes of mutuall edification: For onely charity is that which doth edifie, as may appeare clearly by *1 Corinth. 8. 1*, and *Chapt. 13. Ephes. 4. 15, 16*. Now charity cannot bee maintained, except there be an endeavour to know one anothers estate; nor can the unity of the Spirit bee kept or sought for, without this same care: Therefore a Correspondencie for mutuall intelligence in Spirituall matters, tending to unity and peace in the profession of the truth, is a thing absolutely necessary to bee intended by those that make sincere profession of the Gospell; or, if they intend it not, it is apparent they neglect a fundamentall duty of the life of Christianity, because they make no use of the chiefe and onely meanes of mutuall edification, wherein God is chiefly glorified.

Of the second.

If wee looke upon the Churches, and consider, as wee ought, seriously the lamentable estate wherein they are, the causes thereof, and the issue which is likely to follow, if God doth not prevent the same, it will evidently appeare, that a mutuall and brotherly Correspondency for maintaining of truth

truth and peace is most absolutely necessary to be speedily settled, for publike edification of that which is already decayed, and of carefull preservation of that which is yet entire, from inevitable ruines in time to come. And to make this cleare, the Churches should be considered, as they stand in relation one to another within themselves, and as they relate their common adversaries, who watch over them for their destruction.

I.

In respect of themselves, as they stand within themselves, their case is fearfull and deplorable: for it is most evident, that they are not onely strangers one to another, and care little or nothing one for another in any Spirituall publike waies, which is a great breach of charity and holy communion, for which they have deserved, and deserve still the judgements which are come, and will (if prevention be not used) further come upon them; but they are at variances in great & weighty matters, and by their variances and disputes, they are become full of partialities, of sidings, and of oppositions one against another, so that some of them have studied the overthrow of others, which is a miserable and deplorable case, when it falleth out amongst brethren, and chiefly then, when God and his Gospel is so highly dishonoured thereby, as by these controversies of Protestants it doth appeare he is; for what is more miserable, then that men should become as it were mad to devoure one another, and that every one should eat the flesh of his owne arme, *Manasseh Ephraim*, and *Ephraim Manasseh*, and these two against *Judah*? and what

what is more deplorable, then to see all the excellencie of *Jacob* turned to a reproach and by word amongst the profane adversaries of truth and godlinesse: and the whole fruit of the glorious profession of the Gospel of peace, to become the bitterness of gall and wormwood to those that should reap sweet comforts and salvation thereby: is not this most miserable and deplorable? and yet this is the very case of Protestant Churches within themselves: for they snatch on the right hand, and are still hungry of one anothers flesh; and eat on the left hand, and are not satisfied.

Now if this evill be not remedied, it is most apparent, that they will at last destroy one another: For, *A Kingdome divided within it selfe cannot stand*. But to find a remedy hereunto, there is no possibility, except some course of amiable Correspondency (which should be settled speedily amongst them) be used for the healing of present breaches, whereby they teare their owne bowells in pieces, and for the prevention of future causes of divisions and distractions amongst themselves.

The healing of present breaches can be but three waies intended.

The first is, by labouring to suppress injurious, notorious, and publike scandals, raised against one another, which pre-possesse the minds of parties, and inflame them to vindicate practices more and more.

The second is, by disposing their minds towards reconcilable intentions; which may bee done

done by rectifying their mistakes concerning each other, by setting them in a right way of writing, and treating of Theological matters without passion and prejudice, and by suggesting unto them impartiall waies of proceeding, whereby a full reconciliation of differences, and the unity of the Spirit may bee by Gods grace obtained in due time.

The third is, by procuring a Synod of Protestants, wherein their Brotherly love and reconciliation may bee settled by a firme league of duties to be intended for their inward mutuall edification in future times, and for their joynt outward propagating of the Gospell unto all that are ignorant thereof.

These three waies of healing breaches, as they are most necessary, so they cannot possibly be intended without a speedy settlement of Correspondency and entertaining of Intelligence by some, that may make their addresse, and have access unto all parties to worke these matters upon them by waies void of all exception and partiality: and therefore a settled Correspondency for mutuall Intelligence, in respect of these things, is absolutely necessary. And if it be not intended, but slighted and hindered, certainly the guilt of the ruine of Protestant Churches will fall heave upon those, who give occasion to stop the enter-course of such a Correspondency.

The prevention of future divisions and distractions is necessary to bee thought upon; not onely because naturally our inbred corruption doth be-

get in all humane societies, but chiefly in those which concerne Religion, the seedes of strife, by reason of the pride, the ignorance, and the passion of selfe-seeking conceits of some which trouble all; but also, because these breaches and divisions will continually grow worse and worse, and come to the extremity of imbitterment: so that they will be past curing in short time, if no course bee taken to stop them speedily. Now it is most evident, that no course can be taken, except a settled intercourse of Intelligence betwixt the leading men of the Churches be brought to passe; and this cannot be brought to passe, without the upholding of a Correspondencie: And therefore a Correspondencie is most absolutely necessary to be speedily settled.

In respect of their adversaries which watch over them for their destruction, their case is very dangerous, and exceedingly to be feared. There be two sorts of common adversaries: some are crept in from without amongst them, who make it their worke to foment their divisions, and cast in bones amongst them to keep them at perpetuall variance; as is most cleare by dolefull experience both in Germany and elsewhere. And others stand without, laying new plots, if the old should faile; and maintaining the old ones so long as they can possibly, by all manner of Emisseries and Practices, and with much cost of Bribery and Correspondencie, whereof a little Volume could be written, if need were, but because this is no lesse evident to all that have eyes in their head, then the Sunne is

at noon-day, I shall not need to enlarge my selfe; chiefly, seeing already something hath bin written of this matter not long agoe: and seeing by daily experience the Practices and Plots from without are discovered more and more, with an evident sequence and coherence which they have towards another.

Now, seeing the Papists, though many waies amongst themselves divided, yet, as common adversaries to Protestants, concur and joyn fully with indefatigable paines and diligence, both to undermine the fundamentall Constitutions of the Churches inwardly, and to assault them outwardly to disturb their peace; and both waies to worke out correspondently, not without great cost and expences, their most dangerous plots and attempts, which infallibly will bring Protestancie to ruine, if no common course be thought upon, and concurrently followed to prevent the same. Now no such course can possibly be taken and followed by way of concurrence, without a settlement of some Correspondencie to that effect betwixt the Churches: Therefore this settlement of a Correspondencie is absolutely necessary. For if we know, that the enemies of the Churches, and of the Gospel take a common course to oppose the same, & yet take no thought of any common course, to maintaine both these in safety against their devices, it is evident, that they will work their ends, and that wee wittingly and willingly suffer our selves to be overthrowne, and the Gospel to be extinguished. If then these ends and machinations

of theirs be knowne to any Protestants, who study not to resist the same, it is apparent, that such are guilty not onely of their owne blood, and of the blood of their Brethren in all the Churches; but also of the detriments which may befall unto the profession of the Gospel. From all which evils that I may approve my selfe free, and be found guiltlesse in the presence of God, I have thought good thus to beare witnesse of these things, that I may procure, so farre as in me lyeth, the necessary and onely remedy of imminent dangers, and that it may not be neglected any longer, if possibly it may be used.

Of the third.

It will be altogether needlesse to make in this place any description of the weaknesse and tottering estate of Protestant Princes and Commonwealths, to shew in what case they are by reason of these troubles; but it will suffice in a word or two to point at the true causes of their miseries, and the lamentable issue, which in all humane appearance will follow thereupon, if no prevention bee used. The true causes then of the weake estate are none other, but their inward divisions, chiefly for matters of Religion, which have in matters of State not onely distracted continually their actions, so that, by reason of jealousies concerning Religion, they never could joyne in Councells together for mutuall preservation; but also this hath made some of them to help forward their neighbours overthrow: For, seeing all the commotions
of

of States in this age are originally sprung from the differences of Protestants and Papists in Religion; and seeing the onely aime of the Pope and of his Agents is, and hath been, to root out the Hereticks, that he may reduce all againe to himselfe, by settling Ecclesiasticall affaires according to his owne Lawes (to which nothing is so opposite, as the profession of the Gospel) therefore hee hath used all meanes and waies to trouble the Protestant States, and hath brought these warres upon them to weaken their strength, and make them and the profession of the Gospel to become contemptible: for, perceiving that the flourishing Estate of Protestants did spread the light of the Gospel exceedingly abroad; and that by that light, as well the grosse errors of his Doctrine, and ignorance of his dumb Idoll Clergy, as the Tyranny and superstitiousnesse of his Ecclesiasticall Antichristian Government was discovered more and more, and in the end would be brought to nought: therefore, to keep his Throne and Kingdome from falling, hee hath set his wit and strength aworke to make divisions, and encrease strife amongst Protestants, by flattering some, persecuting others; and finding them sufficiently of themselves disposed and enclined thereunto, hee hath brought his ends so farre about, both in Germany and elsewhere, partly by the Lions waies, and partly by the Foxes; that if the seeds of Ecclesiasticall divisions, which give him all his advantages, be not taken away, there will never be any possibility of preventing a totall desolation of these Churches and States. Now these

these seeds of division cannot possibly be removed without some Correspondency, tending to settle Protestants in a joynt course of professing the Gospel, for the better propagating thereof unto Gods glory, and for their mutuall preservation against these his violent and subtle attempts: And therefore in this respect also a course of Correspondency should be maintained constantly, and countenanced by civill authority, for a concurrence in Spirituall matters betwixt the godly Divines of the Protestant Churches, that the truth, wherein all agree, may be confirmed and supported by Authority to last unto future ages; and the differences, which cause their inward distractions, may be reconciled, so farre as possibly can be done by print, or publike amiable treaties, whereunto the settlement of a Correspondency, and some agency amongst them to this effect is absolutely necessary.

FINIS.

